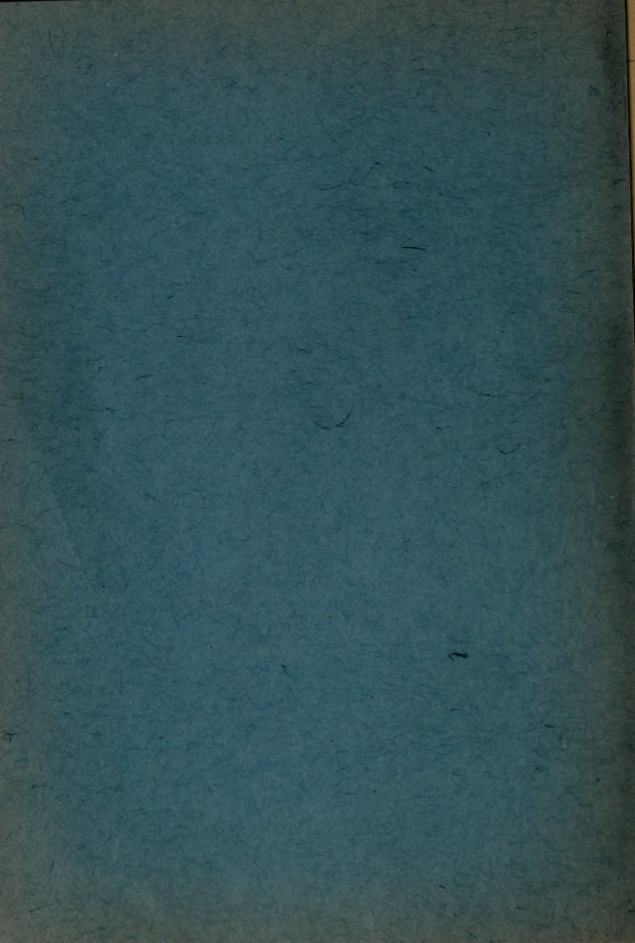


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 383
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Prostitution in the United States

Leo Markun



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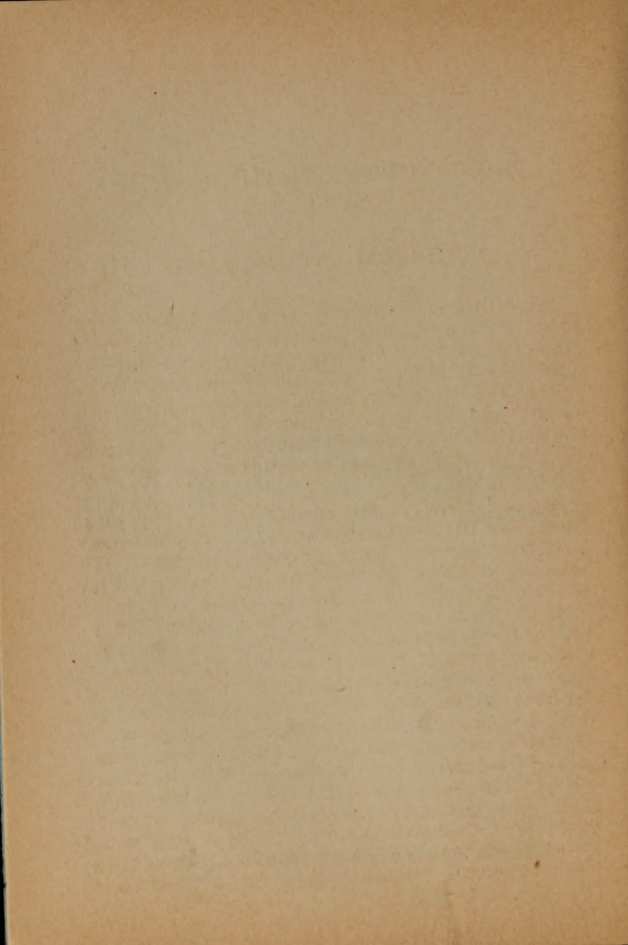
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PROSTITUTION IN THE UNITED STATES

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Prostitution does not flourish under very primitive conditions, and it is a feature of crowded city life rather than of pastoral or agricultural simplicity. It has, however, been called the first profession to arise upon the earth; and there is a story in Genesis which shows that harlots were familiar to the simple shepherds of Palestine, and that a kid was considered a fair fee.

In the first North American settlements, there was little prostitution. This is not to say that the pioneers were unusually chaste. We sometimes think of the Puritans as men and women of unmixed godliness. As a matter of fact, the ban they put on a long list of harmless amusements tended to make sex the most common form of recreation with them. In the colonies south of New England, the pursuit of joy was not banned, but it took some time before theaters and other amusement places were available. Fornication and adultery were common, then, in all the provinces. The Puritans dealt more severely with them, fining, flogging, imprisoning, exposing to public shame, or putting to death sexual offenders who were unfortunate enough to be caught. Since they lived in small towns, it was for a long time

PROSTITUTION IN

difficult for prostitutes to arise. We know, however, that many women had relations with men to whom they were not married. Private morality cannot, in the nature of things, be appraised statistically, and we do not have any record of the callers the cold Puritan lady received while her husband was out hunting or planting corn. Adulterers were discovered often enough to show that there were many of them. After a time, too, we find special penalties provided for "night walkers."

Southern colonies were less strict. What the Cavaliers thought of peccadilloes may be inferred from the Restoration comedies of England, while the Puritan attitude is to be found in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Moreover, social inequality quickly became the rule from New Netherland (or New York) south. The slaves and servants, both black and white, were practically without liberty of choice in sexual matters. The attractive women among them usually became concubines to their masters.

The African slaves were brought from savage or barbarous jungle regions and forced to adjust themselves to the whims of white men with strange ways. Their first and chief duty was obedience. As for chastity and reputation, a learned Southern jurist was afterward to declare explicitly that they had no meaning with regard to a Negress. A colored man might be married to a woman of his own race, but he had no way of remaining with her if the two were separately sold. The owner could take any of his slave women to himself. If any child was born in this way, it was a slave. The

color of the average Negro in the United States has grown much lighter since 1700.

For white servants, who were mostly slaves over a specified term of years, the conditions were not much different. It was provided by law that a female servant who gave birth to an illegitimate child should be bound to her master for an additional period, and that the child should also be an indentured servant until reaching its majority. Evidently, such legislation was intended to improve public morality and to repay the master for loss of work during and after pregnancy. But it was quickly seen that it made lust profitable. The illegitimate children did not cost very much to raise until they were five or six years old, when they were put to work. Many masters were therefore encouraged to have relations with their female servants.

Frederick Douglass tells of a poor Maryland farmer in the nineteenth century who could only afford to buy a single slave. He chose a healthy young Negress, upon whom he depended as a breeder. He was himself a good Christian—which meant that he knew how to embellish his floggings with Biblical texts—and perhaps too dainty to be with the woman himself. He used, however, to lock a white hired man in with the Negress. When twins were born of their union, the woman's master was well pleased. The price of a Negro in the middle of the century was far greater than that of a cow or a horse, and slave-breeding became an important industry in the northern tier of slave states.

The Negress who becomes a white man's mistress does not, except in the most unusual instances, lose caste among her own people. It is better, of course, to be his wife, but this is forbidden in a number of states. In addition to the moral standards imposed on the colored people during the period of slavery, present economic conditions favor laxity. The Negro is excluded from most of the skilled trades, or at least from the unions. He is seldom able to provide a wife and children with even the ordinary comforts of life, let alone the luxuries. Though he be industrious himself, his wife may be reduced to washing clothes and cleaning houses for other people. The attractive young white woman expects to find a husband who is willing and able to support her according to the standards of her parents, or perhaps somewhat higher ones. For the pretty colored girl, this may be a vain hope.

Of the early settlers of our country, the French who came to Louisiana were most familiar with legalized prostitution and most tolerant of it. It is true that there were numerous attempts during the early period to suppress the brothels of France, but they were not very successful. The police were authorized, though, to punish prostitutes as such or because of their disorderly conduct. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many women were exiled to the colonies, especially to Madagascar, to Canada, and to Louisiana. In *Manon Lescaut*, the unfortunate heroine is sent across the Atlantic. Some of the expatriated women became respectable wives, and

their children enjoy the aristocracy which inheres in the Creole families. Others resumed their profession in America.

Both in the French and English colonies, many of the servants were convicts, exiled after they had served their sentences or permitted to escape the penalties of their crimes on condition that they should go to the New World. Into Georgia were sent many debtors and other persons who had made failures of their lives in England. The "black sheep" was found in all the American provinces, as he is today to be encountered in the colonies and in China. We may reasonably infer, then, that morality was not unusually high in America before the Revolution. And though our laws demand something very close to Puritan perfection, delinquency of all sorts is still much commoner than it is in Europe.

The emigrant is, in general, more active and energetic and keen than his neighbor who remains at home. Also he is less scrupulous, less concerned with the value of tradition and custom and law, more individualistic. America, the land of transplanted people, has been the country of the old Puritans. It is now, to a far greater extent, the home of the New Puritanism. The chief element in these creeds is the consciousness of sin. It is interesting to speculate that this may be widespread in America because sinfulness, according to the usual standards, also is. The charge has been made that the countries where prudery is strongest—especially those where English is spoken—house the most lustful people. And the land

of Prohibition, it may be said, has more drunkenness than a good many countries whose inhabitants may boldly ask for beer, wine, rum, gin, whiskey or cognac.

The United States is no longer a new country. Only in a few frontier districts and in recently-built mining camps do the men greatly outnumber the women. Such a condition, which was long characteristic of the whole continent, encourages promiscuity in its least attractive forms. When a pioneer community "gets religion," the sudden accession of goodness commonly leads to violent measures against harlots and gamblers. Right now, America appears to have surrendered to the Salvation Army and its Baptist and Methodist allies. Perhaps our children will see the reaction, but the country is now given over to the repenters and those persons who are providing themselves with evil deeds to repent later.

The example of America has infected Europe, too. Our prosperity and efficiency are supposed to be due in part to our puritanical laws. As these are not very well obeyed, it is difficult to see how they have much to do with the matter. Prostitution can be suppressed, or at least reduced to a minimum, but only at the expense of the "virtue" of the masses of women of a community. This fact, added to the power of money to make law-enforcing officials temporarily blind, explains why our police often neglect to close brothels and to arrest harlots, although the statute obligates them to do so. The same thing is true of some foreign countries, but the United States probably leads

the world in the enactment of laws whose chief office it is to make additional work for the government printers.

With regard to sexual relations, the legislation varies from state to state. What is licit under one jurisdiction may be punishable with long imprisonment a few miles away. It may be noticed that fornication is not an offense under American common law or the British common law, and that it is criminal only by an express statutory provision. Prostitution is not authorized by law anywhere in the United States, but the definition, the penalties, and the attitude of the police and the courts are by no means identical everywhere. It is said that solicitation on the streets is a common law offense, and it would be forbidden in any state where the courts accept this view and the common law is still in force aside from any local legislation against it. For a fuller discussion of the legal conditions with regard to all these offenses, the reader is referred to Little Blue Book No. 1148, *Sexual Crimes and American Law*, by Clement Wood.

In dealing with prostitution, we must not forget the human needs it serves. It is not merely a blot on an abstract thing called the community, as reformers sometimes appear to assume in their speeches and writings. Perhaps it is not altogether an unmixed evil, either, although it is objectionable esthetically and hygienically.

Benjamin Franklin tells in his *Autobiography* how he wanted to marry a girl of Philadelphia, but required a dowry of about a hundred

pounds, or enough to pay the remaining debts on his printing machinery. He was refused, perhaps in order that he should elope with his beloved, after which a smaller payment would necessarily content him. "But this affair having turned my thoughts to marriage," he says, "I look'd round me and made overtures of acquaintance in other places; but soon found that, the business of a printer being generally thought a poor one, I was not to expect money with a wife, unless with such a one as I should not otherwise think agreeable. In the meantime, this hard-to-be-governed passion of youth hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expense and great inconvenience, besides a continual risque to my health by a distemper which of all things I dreaded, though by great good luck I escaped it."

Franklin, who was born in 1706, married in 1730. He was not a libertine, but rather a lover of thrift and order, even something of a Puritan. It is curious to find him objecting to the cost of prostitution, for that of supporting a wife was certain to be more. He hoped for a time, as we have seen, though, that his spouse would help him to pay his debts. The distemper which he feared, that is, syphilis, has been the enemy of prostitution everywhere in modern times—a worse foe, surely, than restrictive and prohibitory legislation. I have not introduced Franklin here for the purpose of taking away any of his greatness, for I am certain that many more of our heroes have had

relations with prostitutes. Not all men are equally frank, and no one is under any compulsion to inform posterity about his private behavior. Under the list of virtues which he prepared for himself, Franklin included:

“CHASTITY

“Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dulness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another’s peace or reputation.”

Most American action against the prostitute is recent. For many years, no serious attempt was made to abolish or to regulate her profession. The World War caused a great deal of puritanical commotion: the soldier who was going to make the world safe for democracy was first of all to be rendered safe for heaven.

NEW YORK IN 1855

When A. J. B. Parent-Duchatelet published his masterly work about prostitution in Paris in 1836, he inspired a number of other investigators to issue reports about the cities with which they were most familiar. Monographs on prostitution in London, Edinburgh, Lisbon, Lyons, Algiers, and Berlin quickly followed. Dr. William M. Sanger's *The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes, and Effects Throughout the World*, first appeared in 1859. The most valuable part of Sanger's book is devoted to a study of conditions in New York, which he himself made in 1855. He became resident physician of Blackwell's Island in 1853. Two years later, the Board of Governors in charge of the charitable and penal institutions of the city asked him to make a study of syphilis in the various houses on Blackwell's Island and to say what plan, in his opinion, "could be adopted to relieve New York City of the enormous amount of misery and expense caused by syphilis."

Sanger then asked Mayor Wood and the chief and captains of police to help him gather information about prostitution in the city. Prohibitory laws existed, but they were not enforced, although an attempt to put them into effect had been somewhat weakly made shortly before. In Sanger's words: "This vice is attaining a position and extent in this community which cannot be viewed without alarm.

It has more than kept pace with the growth of our city. Unlike the vice of a few years since, it no longer confines itself to secrecy and darkness, but boldly strides through our most thronged and elegant thoroughfares, and there, in the broad light of the sun, it jostles the pure, the virtuous, and the good. It is in your gay streets, and in your quiet, home-like streets; it is in your squares, and in your suburban retreats and summer resorts; it is in your theatres, your operas, your hotels; nay, it is even intruding itself into your private circles, and slowly but steadily extending its poison, known but to few and entirely unsuspected by the majority of our citizens. The whole machinery of the law has been turned against these females without success; its only result having been a resolve on their part to confront society with the charge of harsh, cruel and unjust treatment."

Two thousand women were asked to answer a number of questions about themselves and the conditions which had led them to become prostitutes. In age, they ranged from 15 to 77, the greater part of them being between 18 and 25. Seven-eighths of the women studied were under 30. Of the older ones, most were keepers of brothels rather than active harlots. Sanger tells us—the marks of emphasis are his own—that "*The average duration of life among these women does not exceed four years from the beginning of their career!*" I think this was a great exaggeration. As a physician on Blackwells' Island, he was most familiar with the seriously diseased prostitutes.

The number of women born abroad was 1,238, as compared with 762 born in the United States, 394 of them in the state of New York. It appeared that the native-born from other states came chiefly from manufacturing districts. Of the foreign-born, 706 had immigrated from Ireland, 255 from Germany, and 104 from England. As to the British dominions, Sanger says: "The ratio in which the several parts of that kingdom supply the New World with courtesans may be stated in round numbers as follows: Ireland contributes one prostitute to every four thousand of her population; Scotland, one prostitute to every sixteen thousand of population; England and Wales, one prostitute to every fifty thousand of population." According to the illegitimacy statistics in the British Isles, Ireland was far more chaste than England or Scotland. I have already suggested, in writing about concubinage, that the Irish figures at home have probably been inaccurate. The young Irish women who were coming to America in large numbers in the middle of the last century were mostly poor and ignorant. The German immigration was also great in the years that followed 1848. Of the foreign women, many had been resident in the country for only a year or two, or even less. Although Sanger does not mention the fact here, it is undoubtedly true that a considerable proportion of the foreign-born prostitutes in New York in the 1850's and for some time later were brought into the country for the purpose of engaging in the traffic. The women said for the most part

they had come to America to improve their condition or because their relatives were already in the United States or brought them across the Atlantic. Only one-fifth had paid for their own passage, or claimed that they had done so. There were 28 who admitted that their seducers had paid for their passage, and 9 whom public authorities had assisted, presumably to rid their own countries of undesirable persons; 905 said that they had been helped by relatives and friends. What the basis of the friendship was, the statistics do not disclose.

As to their education, 714 claimed to be able to read and write "well" and 546 "imperfectly," while 219 could not read, and 521 were illiterate. The native-born prostitutes were, on the whole, better-educated than those of foreign origin. Education was not at this time compulsory in New York. Those who read and wrote "well," as Sanger says, meant that they could read a page or two of print without much trouble and were able to sign their names.

There were 1,216 single women, 490 married ones, and 294 widows. It appears that there were no divorcees. Of the married women, 71 were living with their husbands. The others had been deserted by their husbands or had left them because of ill-treatment, real or alleged. Of the single women, thirty per cent had one or more children, and the percentages were 73 and 79 in the case of married women and widows. One single woman had borne ten children, and two had given birth to six each. One of the married women had borne

15. It is impossible to tell whether the children born out of wedlock were begotten in a period of concubinage or of genuine prostitution.

Of the 2,000 courtesans questioned under Sanger's directions, 821 admitted that they had suffered from gonorrhoea, syphilis, or, in 36 instances, from both. The actual number who had been or were venereally diseased was no doubt considerably higher.

To the question, "What was the cause of your becoming a prostitute?" the replies were as follows:

Causes	Numbers
Inclination	513
Destitution	525
Seduced and abandoned.....	258
Drink, and the desire to drink.....	181
Ill-treatment of parents, relatives or husbands	164
As an easy life.....	124
Bad company	84
Persuaded by prostitutes.....	71
Too idle to work.....	29
Violated	27
Seduced on board emigrant ships.....	16
Seduced in emigrant (immigrant) boarding houses	8
Total	2,000

It is interesting and important to observe that over a fourth of the number admitted that inclination, not poverty or seduction, had made prostitutes of them. We can be sure that the number was really much greater than this, although we must remember that motives are mixed. The wealthy nymphomaniac may indulge her lust without becoming a courtesan.

The young woman who is poor, lustful, and attractive is likely to find in prostitution some sort of satisfaction for her principal wants.

Sanger represents the usual tone of the last century—one that has not yet entirely disappeared—when he says: “If their representations were borne out by facts, it would make the task of grappling with the vice a most arduous one, and afford very slight grounds to hope for any amelioration; but it is imagined that the circumstances which induced the ruin of most of those who gave the answer will prove that, if a positive inclination to vice was the proximate cause of the fall, it was but the result of other and controlling influences. In itself such an answer would imply an innate depravity, a want of true womanly feeling, which is actually incredible. The force of desire can neither be denied nor disputed, but still in the bosoms of most females that force exists in a slumbering state until aroused by some outside influences. No woman can understand its power until some positive cause of excitement exists. What is sufficient to awaken the dormant passion is a question that admits innumerable answers. Acquaintance with the opposite sex, particularly if extended so far as to become a reciprocal affection, will tend to this; so will the companionship of females who have yielded to its power; and so will the excitement of intoxication. But it must be repeated, and most decidedly, that without these or some equally stimulating cause, the full force of desire is seldom known to a virtuous woman. In the male sex nature

has provided a more susceptible organization than in females, apparently with the beneficent design of repressing those evils which must result from mutual appetite equally felt by both. In other words, man is the *aggressive* animal, so far as desire is involved. Were it otherwise, and the passions in both sexes equal, illegitimacy and prostitution would be far more rife in our midst than at present."

Queen Victoria was in her kitchen, eating bread and honey; and the good little girls, on both sides of the Atlantic, were very, very good. Strange to say, this Blackwell's Island physician, who should have seen the truth clearly, chose rather to look at a fairy tale about the lack of sexual desires in "virtuous" women. We have not yet given up the strange notion that the man invariably seduces the woman, never the woman the man, and that this is due to inherent differences between them. Sanger is altogether misleading when he remarks, "Undoubtedly there are cases where the woman is the seducer, but these are so rare as to be hardly worth mentioning."

He complains that many obscene books and prints were being sold in New York: "Boys and young men may be found loitering at all hours round hotels, steamboat docks, railroad depots, and other places, ostensibly selling newspapers or pamphlets, but secretly offering vile, lecherous publications to those who are likely to be customers. . . . The venders have a trick which they frequently perform, and which can scarcely be regretted. In a small bound volume they insert about half a dozen

highly-colored obscene plates, which are cut to fit the size of the printed page. Having fixed upon a victim, they cautiously draw his attention to the pictures by rapidly turning over the leaves, but they do not allow him to take the book into his hands, although they give him a good opportunity to note its binding. He never dreams that the plates are loose, and feels sure that in buying the book he buys the pictures also. When the price is agreed upon, the salesman hints that, as he is being watched, the customer had better turn his back for a moment while taking the money from his pocket-book, and in this interval he slips the plates from between the leaves and conceals them. The next moment the parties are again face to face, the price handed over, and the book he has seen before is handed to the purchaser under a renewed caution, and is carefully pocketed. The book-seller leaves, and at the first opportunity the prize is covertly drawn forth to be examined more minutely, and the unwary one finds that he has paid several dollars for some few printed pages, without pictures, which would have been dear at as many cents."

Not all purchasers were so unfortunate. Some were able to get the desired prints, or to obtain books which the police considered indecent. There were, too, "voluptuous novels," chiefly translations from the French, "with wood-cuts which approach lasciviousness as nearly as possible without being indictable." Sanger asserts that "there can be but one opinion as to the share obscene and voluptuous

books have in ruining the character of the young, and they may justly be considered as causes, indirect it may be, of prostitution." Many later writers blame the moving pictures, but in the 1850's the yellow-backed pamphlets were supposed to be at the root of all evil. As though men and women did not make love and kiss and embrace before there were any books! As though adultery and fornication came into existence after there were pageants and plays glorifying sex! Are the illiterate more chaste than the literate? I think, rather, that if books and plays and pictures are harmful sexually, it is in substituting incomplete and unsatisfactory gratifications for the proper ones. The reader may try to content himself with descriptions instead of with persons of the opposite sex. The "indecent" publications reduce illicit intercourse, in all probability, instead of adding to it. But they make small difference of any kind.

Of the 2,000 prostitutes whom Sanger's assistants questioned, 302 declared that they had means of support other than the fees received from patrons, while the rest were dependent on these for their livelihood. Nearly half, or 933, had been servants before becoming courtezans, and the next largest number, 499, claimed to have lived with parents or friends until adopting the calling. The remainder had been engaged in a variety of occupations. One woman said she had been an artist, another had been a hospital nurse, three had taught school, a considerable number had been engaged in factories and workshops. The average wage which

these women had received was very low, less than four dollars a week. The cost of living was indeed very low in 1855, and many of the girls had lived at home. It was, in most cases, the desire for luxuries rather than the inability to gain simple food and shelter which turned them to prostitution; and strong sexual feeling was surely present in a large part of the cases. For this we have the testimony of the women themselves, as already noticed.

"What business did your father follow?" was one of the questions asked. Farmers led, with 440. Next followed laborers, with 259, and carpenters, with 139. Only one was reported as a brothel-keeper. There were six clergymen among them, 13 lawyers, 19 physicians, five men of property, and 31 naval officers—more than the liquor dealers, who numbered 22. It is clear that the women came from all social classes, and it appears that poor people did not contribute more than their proportionate share.

Three hundred and fifty-nine of the girls said that they drank no intoxicating liquors, while 647 declared that they drank moderately, 754 admitted that they were intemperate drinkers, and 240 were willing to describe themselves as habitual drunkards. It is apparent that drinking was very common among the New York prostitutes of the last century. The courtesan is usually addicted to intoxicants, as also to cigarettes and, in many cases, to narcotic drugs. Sanger tells us that the quality of the gin, rum, brandy, whiskey, and wine sold in the cheaper brothels was very bad.

The religious statistics are as follows:

“Were your parents Protestants, Catholics, or non-professors?”

Religion	Numbers
Protestants	960
Catholics	977
Non-professors (atheists, agnostics, etc.)	63

“Were you trained to any religion? If so, was it Protestant or Catholic?”

Religion	Numbers
Protestants	972
Roman Catholics	977
No religious training	51

“Do you profess the same religion now?”

Profession	Numbers
Profess religion as educated	1909
Non-professors	91

It is certainly impossible to argue from such figures as these that religious training prevents prostitution. The parents of these women were brought up, for the most part, at a time when religious doubt was very strong in the United States. And though the harlots came to a large extent from pious communities of Ireland and Germany, we may fairly infer that the proportion of unbelievers among them and their parents was considerably lower than it was for the people of their native places as a whole.

Brothels of the first class were known as “Parlor Houses.” The women who lived in them very seldom went out in search of patrons. They were almost always young and attractive, and they could count on receiving enough visitors without making a display of

themselves on the street. It was well enough for them to walk up the fashionable side of Broadway in the afternoon, or to go for a carriage ride with their visitors, or to be seen in the theatres; but they found it best not to be noisy or conspicuous.

The Parlor Houses were expensively furnished, and the guests who were received there had to pay what were for those days very high prices. Champagne was furnished at three dollars a bottle, and it was customary for visitors to treat all the girls in the house. Most of the Parlor House prostitutes were American-born. "Some of them," Sanger says, "are very well educated; accomplished musicians and artists are sometimes found among them, while others aspire to literature." Most of them received as much as fifty dollars a week from their patrons, but they did not, as a class, save much money. Yet we are told of one young woman who accumulated seven thousand dollars in a few years of prostitution. It was a little fortune, equivalent, say, to fifty thousand dollars in our time.

A large number of the first-class courtesans were living in private lodgings, where they could save more for themselves than in the Parlor Houses. The brothel-keepers received about fourteen dollars a week for board and lodging, also a dollar for every visitor and the profits on all the wine sold. Many of them grew rich. In some cases, they rented their houses, gaudy furniture and all, from exceedingly respectable citizens.

The houses of the second class were fur-

nished with less splendor, and the patrons cared less about order and the semblance of refinement. Here there were more foreign-born women, and also a number of prostitutes who were no longer sufficiently young and attractive for the Parlor Houses. The wines and liquors sold were less expensive, and everything was arranged for men who could not afford to spend large sums of money.

There were many brothels which appealed to foreigners. The German newcomers, not all of whom were very quick to learn the English language and to adopt American customs, gathered in resorts of their own. Their brothels, even in those where the fee was small, were neat and orderly. As in the mother country, the prostitutes were often to be found sewing or knitting while they were waiting. Many of the houses were primarily beer saloons, and not all who visited them came to engage in amorous adventures. A casual visitor might not know, before entering the place, that it was a brothel, but a girl would come up and ask to be treated. There were also a number of German dance halls, serving to a certain extent as places where the prostitutes might solicit custom.

In the saloons catering to sailors, there was a great deal of drunkenness and rioting; and the women in these places had to be durable rather than lovely. It was necessary that they should be able to drink a great deal with their maritime friends and yet not become drunk themselves. It was sometimes part of their duty to unload the pockets of any money a

sailor still had after he had treated everybody in the room until he was no longer able to keep his feet.

There were brothels of a still lower order. Sanger tells us about the houses in the slums: "They are generally kept by an old prostitute, who gathers around her some of the most debased of her class, takes a cheap basement wherever she can obtain possession of one suited to her purpose, erects a small bar furnished with three or four bottles of the commonest liquor she can procure, partitions off one or two small hovels of bedrooms, and forthwith begins housekeeping. . . . These dens are largely patronized by the vilest of the male sex; the petty thieves who hang around the public markets, stealing from the wagons, or who haunt the doors of grocery stores and abstract whatever they can reach; as they find them convenient places of concealment, and can frequently dispose of their booty by means of the women. Another class of visitors consists of the lowest order of rowdies, who assume a free license to perpetrate any mischief they please, because there is no one to interfere with them. . . . It is dangerous for a stranger to enter a place of this description, for if he does not get his pocket picked by one, he will most probably be assaulted by the other class of visitors."

There were, too, "panel houses," lodging houses for prostitutes which were especially constructed with secret doors, so that the visitors were usually robbed of their money. These were meant especially for strangers in

the city, and those who had taken a few drinks offered an especially easy prey.

Sanger tried to learn the number of prostitutes in the city during the winter of 1856-57. There had just been a commercial panic, and it was believed that the number of harlots in New York was increased by at least one fifth as a result. The chief of police estimated the number at five thousand or less. The inspectors of police gave figures for each district, and the total amounted to less than four thousand. Sanger made allowances for the harlots in hospitals and jails, and he thought there were probably about six thousand courtezans in the city altogether. The number must have been still higher, especially if the women who received money from many men, but who did not live in brothels and who were engaged in some other occupation as well, were included.

The police reported 378 houses of prostitution and 89 houses of assignation, not used entirely by professional courtezans. We must bear in mind the fact that brothels were not recognized by law, and that some attempts had been made to suppress them. It is obvious, then, that these figures are too low. The population of the city in 1858 was about 700,000, but there were large places suburban to it whose inhabitants were accustomed to come to New York for pleasure.

Sanger's calculations led to the conclusion that little less than a capital of four million dollars was invested in prostitution. He thought that the receipts of the prostitutes amounted to about three million dollars a year,

and that the amount spent for intoxicants in brothels came to about two million annually.

Letters were written to the mayors of the principal cities of the country in which they were asked to estimate the number of prostitutes to be found within their jurisdiction. The figures they give are in some cases palpably wrong. The mayors were misinformed, or they were anxious to show that their cities were unusually chaste. The results as tabulated by Sanger may be of interest, however:

New York on the resident population of the city proper, has	1	prostitute to every	40	men
Including the su- burbs	1	" " "	64	"
Buffalo has	1	" " "	65	"
Louisville has	1	" " "	64	"
Newark has	1	" " "	366	"
New Haven has	1	" " "	87	"
Norfolk has	1	" " "	29	"
Philadelphia has	1	" " "	344	"
Pittsburgh has	1	" " "	192	"
Savannah has	1	" " "	44	"

Sanger considers that the figures for Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Newark are worthless. "In both Norfolk and Savannah," he says, "we presume that the larger portion of the abandoned women at the time the census was taken were colored women, whose virtue is always at a discount under the most favorable circumstances, and to which a seaport is always fatal." The mayor of Savannah reported that there were 93 white and 105 colored prostitutes, together with "supplies

from New York City, who came during the winter.

In the South, most of the Negresses who were to be found in brothels were no doubt slaves. In New York, too, there were many colored prostitutes before 1860. These were, of course, free women. They had not been taught that chastity was a virtue for them, and the problem of earning a living was for them peculiarly difficult.

Sanger thought that prostitution was a great evil, but one that could not be entirely suppressed, and he argued in favor of some such system of regulation as then prevailed in Paris and other European cities. "The lash, the dungeon, the rack, and the stake have each been tried," he says, "and all have proven equally powerless to accomplish the object. Admitting that, in religion, morals, or politics, it is impossible to force concurrence in any particular sentiment, while a kindly persuasive plan may lead to its adoption; admitting that all attempt to compel prostitutes to be virtuous have notoriously failed; has not the time arrived for a change of policy? If, in direct ratio to the stringency of prohibitory measures, the vice sought to be exterminated has steadily increased, does not reason suggest the expediency of resorting to other measures for its suppression? . . . In common with other nations, we have passed laws intended to crush out prostitution; have made vigorous protests (on paper) against its existence; and there our labors have ended. The experience acquired in this course of legislation only demonstrates

that such laws cannot be enforced so as to produce the desired effect. But why are they still retained on the statute books? . . . It is not to be supposed that any system of laws will entirely eradicate prostitution; history, social arrangements and physiology alike forbid any such utopian idea. But will not a more enlightened policy do much toward diminishing it?"

As to laws against prostitution, we have them in greater abundance by far than was the case in the middle of the nineteenth century. The police raid an occasional brothel, and the less naive portion of the public assumes that the regular hush money has not been paid or that it is necessary to please the good ladies of the W. C. T. U., with a view to the next election. This much is certain, that there would be less chance for robbers, burglars, and murderers to escape if the law-enforcing officials were not expected to devote part of their time to the seizing of petty gamblers, venders of beer and whiskey, and women of pleasure.

The registration of prostitutes, which Dr. Sanger desired, may be of hygienic value, providing that the medical examinations which go with it are not merely perfunctory. He was obviously right in demanding that women should be able to secure treatment for venereal disease at the public cost without first being convicted of vagrancy. However, it is true that governmental control cannot be complete in a large city. Besides, American thought has, up to recent years, been individualistic.

And now, when paternalism has gained a strong position among us, it is chiefly puritanical. The government is supposed to be suppressing, not regulating, prostitution.

The prostitution problem is first of all a hygienic one. Before syphilis was feared, the whole matter wore a different aspect. When Sanger wrote his book, there was in New York no free hospital for the treatment of venereal disease except the one on Blackwell's Island. The name suggests lunatics and petty criminals—it has recently been changed to Welfare Island, but since the same asylums and prisons remain, the associations will not be different. The diseased harlot who wanted medical treatment and could not pay a private physician, or who needed nursing and care which she could not secure except in a hospital, might possibly be received in one. As Sanger describes the situation in 1858, "The principal public or free hospital where the venereal disease is *confessedly* treated is the Penitentiary Hospital on Blackwell's Island, now known as the Island Hospital. To obtain the benefit of medical treatment therein, it is necessary that the patient should have been sentenced from the Court of Sessions to the Penitentiary for the commission of some crime; or committed to the Workhouse by a police justice for vagrancy, drunkenness, or disorderly conduct. From this fact it will be seen that there is, strictly speaking, no 'free' hospital for such diseases, as the only one intended for their treatment will or can receive none but those sentenced for an infraction of the laws."

Both men and women who came to the public dispensaries to be treated for syphilis or gonorrhoea were advised, if their cases were severe, to appear before a justice of the police and confess themselves guilty of vagrancy. They were then confronted with the alternative of doing without the necessary treatment or being sentenced for from one to six months in one of the correctional institutions on Blackwell's Island. There they were treated as prisoners and forced to wear the regulation uniform. The greatest faults of such a system were two: many prostitutes and other diseased persons refused to receive medical care on such terms, and those who did permit themselves to be enrolled as convicts were frequently turned into true criminals by their experience. The method is still employed in the case of narcotic drug addicts who wish to be cured and who are unable to pay the fees charged by private sanitariums.

A CHANGING POINT OF VIEW

To Sanger, it appeared that prostitution was an evil which could not altogether be eradicated, and that it was best to deal with it as a permanent condition some of the worst evils of which could be removed. Most physicians and students of social conditions during the middle of the nineteenth century agreed with him. In the United States as in Europe, all attempts to suppress it had failed. Brothels could be closed, of course; notorious courtesans could be punished and exiled; but prostitution, under one form or another, persisted. Moreover, restrictions upon "legalized vice" invariably caused greater temptations to be placed in the way of respectable women, married or unmarried.

Great Britain, where the regulation of courtesans according to the Continental methods was unknown during the first half of the century, experimented with them in the 60's and 70's. The Contagious Disease Act was slipped quietly through Parliament in 1864. Two years later, twelve English and two Irish districts which suffered greatly from venereal disease because of the many soldiers and sailors to be found there, were placed under sanitary control similar to that of Paris and Berlin. The statistics show unmistakably that syphilis and gonorrhoea in the regions subjected to the provisions of the Contagious Disease Acts were

reduced as a result of the compulsory physical examinations of prostitutes. It was the idea of English liberty even more than the Nonconformist conscience which these laws offended, and Herbert Spencer was prominent among the men and women who worked for their repeal, finally secured in 1883.

In the United States, great attention was paid to the English experiment. While all was going well, the American agitators for police regulation were hopeful of extending a similar system to this country. When the Contagious Disease Acts were suspended, their case was finally lost. There were still to be sporadic attempts to secure from states and cities definite recognition that prostitution existed, but the puritanical opponents were almost universally successful after 1883.

In 1870, the Missouri legislature authorized the city of St. Louis "to suppress or regulate houses of ill-fame." There were in that city a large number of people who had recently immigrated from Germany, and it was desired to regulate the brothels rather than to attempt to suppress them. The prostitutes were to be examined by six physicians, each of whom was given a special district. The number was insufficient, the authority given to the inspectors and the police for the enforcement of the regulations was inadequate, and yet it appeared that conditions in the city improved. The Missouri law was repealed, after a very short trial, because of moral indignation. An anonymous writer in the *St. Louis Morning Advertiser*, January 12, 1895, declares that the repeal

"was the result, not of any failure of the measure to accomplish the wholesome ends for which it was enacted, but it was in obedience to a morbid sentiment, begotten in absolute ignorance of the subject. There was not a vote from any member representing a city constituency favorable to the repeal of the law, and not a vote expressive of the sentiment of a country constituency against it. The incidents attending the event were dramatic. Throughout the State there was a moral uprising against what was regarded as the licensing of vice, and the lobbies of both branches of the legislature were taken complete possession of by the clergy of the various denominations and earnest co-workers of the other sex. A petition, praying for the repeal of the obnoxious law, signed by more than one hundred thousand good people, was presented. The document was cumbersome. A wheelbarrow decorated with white ribbons, and accompanied by a group of innocent young girls attired in spotless white gowns, was brought into service, and on it the gigantic and emphatic protest against the licensing of vice was wheeled up to the clerk's desk to be read. Courageous, indeed, would have been the country member who would have voted otherwise than he did. There were, of course, counter-petitions from the cities, and conspicuous among the signers of these latter were members of the medical profession. Indeed, I am sure the law received the almost unanimous endorsement of the doctors of medicine, as it received quite as unani-

mously the condemnation of the doctors of divinity."

Saloons and brothels are of chief concern to the citizens of large cities. The opposition to them comes largely from the villages and the country districts. Does it, then, reflect disinterested virtue? Have we not reason to think of the fable of the dog in the manger in this connection? Whether or not country people are chaster than those who live in cities, they are certainly, as a class, less intelligent. Men who excel in the professions or in business find that there are much greater opportunities for them in such cities as New York, Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia. The New York day-laborer may not be any better endowed with brains than the farm hired man, but he has more varied experiences and better educational facilities of all sorts. Narrowness and intolerance are provincial weaknesses especially. I do not mean to argue that every city dweller is wise and broad-minded, while every farmer is foolish and unable to see beyond the end of his nose; but I think that the rural interference with urban methods of pursuing happiness is a particularly vicious kind of tyranny.

The St. Louis experiment, because it was imperfectly carried out and ended before it had had a fair trial, proves nothing either way with regard to the advantages of regulation. The results have been cited by debaters on both sides of the question of tolerating and controlling prostitution, however, because it was the chief attempt to carry out the Continental

system in this country under definite legal authorization.

Under the St. Louis law, all prostitutes and kept mistresses were required to register their names and addresses, and to give notice whenever they moved. They did not have to live in brothels, but the fact that they resided in houses or rooms of their own did not exempt them from the general supervision. They were supposed to be examined weekly by physicians, at least if they appeared to be diseased. Although this provision was laxly carried out, the leading medical authorities of the city believed it to be of sanitary advantage. A hospital was maintained for venereally diseased courtesans, and it was supported by fees collected from the keepers of brothels and the women who carried on prostitution in furnished rooms. All public and semi-public forms of soliciting were barred, and brothels were not distinguished by red lights or other signs.

During the Civil War, the medical officers of the United States army in Nashville, Tennessee, required the prostitutes of that city to submit to regular examination. According to Colonel Fletcher, who was in charge of the work, venereal disease among the soldiers became extremely rare. The system lasted for nearly three years, and it was regarded as an unqualified success.

In 1871, the legislature of New York passed an act for the regulation of prostitution, but the governor failed to sign it. In 1875 and 1876, there were several attempts made to legalize the traffic, but nothing important was done.

A New York grand jury in 1876 strongly recommended the supervision of prostitution by the health and police authorities. The opposition was too powerful to be overcome. Sentiment was crystallizing in favor of a single standard of sexual morality. In Pennsylvania, in St. Louis, in Cincinnati, and in Congress with regard to the District of Columbia, there were unsuccessful efforts made to secure a frank recognition that prostitution existed and was likely to exist for some time.

In the 1890's, the New York police officials were less willing than they had been in the 1850's to admit that they knew of the existence of prostitutes and brothels. As a matter of fact, prostitution appears to have grown even faster than population. The city was "wide open." It had a population of between a million and a half and two million during this decade, and the inclusion of Brooklyn brought the official figures for 1900 close to three and a half millions. The suburbs were becoming populous, and their male inhabitants frequently came to Manhattan Island in search of pleasure. The number of prostitutes in New York in 1895 was estimated to be somewhere between 25,000 and 50,000.

The regular international trade in young women had grown considerably. The Italian "padrones" were bringing in a great many girls of ten or twelve and filling brothels in the lower part of New York with them. The children were actually slaves. The white slave traffic was not confined to girls, however. Many boys were brought from Italy and trained

to be beggars, street musicians, bootblacks, etc.

It is not true, though, that immigration in general was increasing the proportionate number of prostitutes. Since Sanger made his investigation, the proportion of American-born courtesans in New York and other cities of the United States had gone up a great deal. In fact, it is likely enough that he had to do mostly with the friendless, and that he therefore exaggerated the number of foreign harlots in 1855-58.

The great Russian-Jewish immigration into New York began about 1881, and since that time it has been large. From other countries, too, where the social conditions were more or less similar, the Jews came in considerable numbers. The Jewish writers claim a high sexual morality for their people, and this seems to be conceded by most Gentile critics. The matter cannot be determined statistically, though. This much can be said, that a great many Jews took part in the business of prostitution in New York in the period from 1885 to 1915; no doubt there are still many engaged in it. For all classes of immigrants, especially those who came from rural districts, there were special temptations in prostitution. The children, becoming accustomed to American standards of life and, above all, to the more showy luxuries, were dissatisfied with home conditions. They lost their respect for the parental teachings, and they became accustomed to learning about American ways from the companions they met in the streets rather than at home. Yet the available statistics in-

dicates that the foreign-born women contribute fewer prostitutes, in proportion to their total number, than do those of native birth, at least in New York. If children born in America of foreign parents were separately considered, it might quite possibly come out that more than their share become courtesans and concubines. The statistical treatment of prostitution has become practically impossible, and it is necessary to say that some of my conclusions about present conditions are more or less subjective. There is some reason to believe that the daughters of the foreign-born, have swelled the ranks of the flappers rather than of the professional prostitutes.

I deal chiefly with New York simply because the best studies of prostitution in the United States have to do with that city. It might in many ways be better to investigate the development of illicit relations in Boston and Philadelphia, where prudery (and, I believe, prostitution as well) are more common than they are in New York. Comparisons are very difficult to make because of the lack of registration of harlots. To compare the number of women arrested for sexual offenses is to learn more about the attitude of the police than about the prevalence of illicit relations in the various cities. Illegitimacy statistics, when they are available, help little to solve the problem. The active harlot is not likely to bear many children; and illegitimate births would afford a rough index of the repressive measures taken with regard to prostitution if

the increasing use of contraceptives did not upset the whole matter.

As to the comparative morality of city and country, various opinions have been expressed. It is easy to assume that immorality is more usual with New Yorkers than with residents of Cornfield Junction, because there are cabarets and dance-halls and all sorts of noisy resorts in the metropolis, and also because the rustic finds a variety of seductive influences in his way when he comes alone for a visit to a large city. A woman who lives in a village of the Catskills expressed a truer view when she said that her sons needed only a gallon of gasoline and the use of the family car to induce girls to have relations with them, while a young man living in New York would probably be exposed to considerable expense.

The Raines Law, enacted in 1896, did much to stimulate prostitution. It provided simply that liquor might not be sold on Sunday in the ordinary saloon, but there it should be available to people eating meals in the restaurants attached to hotels. Saloons have more recently turned into "soft drink parlors," but the Raines Law converted large numbers of them into brothels. If space was available behind or above the barroom, it was partitioned off into sleeping quarters. Since, however, most travelers preferred the regular hotels, there was some prospect that the bedrooms would represent an economic liability. But some bright person conceived the idea that they might profitably be used as assignation houses.

An attempt had been made shortly before—

for there were brief fits of puritanism at intervals throughout the nineteenth century—to close the notorious brothels and to purify the districts. The result had been the dispersal of the prostitutes, chiefly throughout the slum districts. They were not welcomed in the Ghetto, and on at least one occasion a rabbi made a fiery speech against prostitution in an East Side street which they had pretty much taken over to themselves. The immigrants had little influence; and the politicians were concerned with making as much for themselves as they could without giving the reformers a chance to oust them. They welcomed the Raines Law hotel, which scattered the harlots among more or less residential districts, and which tended to make them less conspicuous on Broadway. Besides, every saloon-keeper who became also the head of a house of assignation found it necessary to be on good terms with the city administration and, above all, with the police officers. An arrest would mean not merely the paying of a fine, but probably the revocation of his license to sell liquor as well.

In 1895, Dr. F. R. Sturgis, who was a member of the medical staff of the New York City Hospital, lamented the fact that the prostitutes, who came to be treated for venereal diseases were no longer compelled to stay for a certain length of time. As soon as they felt a little better, although their diseases were still contagious, they were anxious to get out and return to their trade. Sturgis thought that

syphilis was steadily increasing in the city, largely because of this fact.

Asked how it might be checked, he replied: "Proper control, if honestly and conscientiously carried out, would in my opinion, decidedly check the increase of the disease, and probably decrease not only its virulence of the disease, but its frequency. As to the plan, I must decline to commit myself to any special one, as it is impossible, in the present condition of municipal politics, to even hope that such a thing would be conscientiously and thoroughly carried out. Irrespective of the question of official blackmail which is always in these cases possible, and which a recent investigation in this city has shown to be more than possible, the sentiment of the Angle-Saxon race, whether wise or foolish, is strongly against the question of official supervision and control of this evil. Although it is a self-evident fact that such things as harlots and syphilis exist, we declare that nothing shall be done to check or control them. In sanctified circles such control, I understand, is considered a compromise with sin."

The white slave agitation arose in Great Britain during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and became of wide general interest in a number of countries in the first few years of the twentieth. A German writer, Felix Baumann, declares that there were at one time about 20,000 dealers in women in New York. The number is certainly far too great, even if some of them were "whole-

salers" who sent foreign girls into cities of the interior.

In French official documents, the term *Traite des Blanches*, traffic in white women, was first used for the international commerce in prostitutes. The contrast was with the *Traite des Noirs*, the African slave trade, against which a number of international agreements had been made. White slavery is not an entirely accurate term. Some of the women are practically enslaved, but it is rather because of their ignorance than because they are held by a superior force. Girls are often taken to foreign countries, where they expect to receive good theatrical positions, and then brought into brothels. Or, even if they know why they are going abroad, they do not realize that their inability to speak the language and to understand foreign laws and customs will very likely cause them to fall into a state of entire dependence on the brothel-keeper. In a minority of cases, the women are bought and sold, and they derive no personal gain from their prostitution.

Jane Addams tells of a Breton girl who was brought to the United States as an actress and put into a Chicago brothel. Although she earned about \$250 a week, she received no money for herself. She was made to perform various household tasks, she was disciplined with a stick, and she was never allowed to leave the house. How typical such a case was in the first decade of this century, it is difficult to tell. Sensational writers seized eagerly upon the available details, and perhaps they

give an untrue idea of the way prostitution was then organized. There was never, so far as I have been able to learn, a great international syndicate for the supplying of brothels. There were dealers in women, undoubtedly, and they often had foreign connections. The genuine enslavement of prostitutes was always a risky business, though, except perhaps in the case of the children handled by the "padrones." Most usually, the women were told that they were at liberty to depart freely, providing that they first paid their debts. In order that these might be larger, they were encouraged to buy expensive clothes and luxuries of all sorts through the woman manager of the brothel, who added a generous profit for herself.

The first international white slave congress was held in 1899, and there were several later ones. In 1906, a vigilance committee for the suppression of the traffic in women was formed in the United States. In 1910, as the result of much yellow journalism and vigorous puritanical propaganda, the Mann Act was passed. Under its provisions, "any person who shall knowingly transport or cause to be transported or aid or assist in obtaining transportation for or in transporting in interstate or foreign commerce or in any territory or in the District of Columbia, any woman or girl for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose," is liable to a penalty of imprisonment for five years or a fine of up to \$5,000, or both. In case the girl

who is transported is under the age of eighteen, the penalty may be doubled.

What is an immoral purpose? In a statute, such words are absolutely absurd. The lawyers who prepare acts use involved clauses and ancient formulas to make absolutely clear the intent of a law, and then they frequently put in a phrase that may mean anything or nothing. A purpose is immoral when some transgression against the ordinary standards of right and wrong is intended. A broad interpretation of the Mann Act would make the man who sends a young girl into another state, or who even gives her enough money to ride on a street car from one place in the city of Washington to another, for the purpose of telling a lie, liable to a ten-year term in a Federal prison and to a fine of \$10,000. The law was intended, however, to break up the so-called "white slave traffic," not to prevent lying. For immorality, to the puritan and the prude, means a violation of the accepted standards of sexual behavior. It is unfortunate that the W. C. T. U., the Methodists, the Baptists, and the *Christian Science Monitor* are remaking our language to suit themselves. Temperance stands for abstinence and virtue for chastity in the ordinary usage of today. Perhaps the day is not far off when rascality will mean chewing gum and thus violating the terms of the Forty-sixth Amendment.

The idiocy of the man who wrote the act of 1910 left to the United States Supreme Court the task of deciding what it meant. In other words, it gave that nominally judicial body a

legislative task. To understand the present effect of the law, it is necessary to turn to the Diggs-Caminetti decision of 1917. Here is established the principle that the man who takes a woman into another state, or who brings her into the United States, or who travels with her in a district under the direct control of Congress, not for the purpose of sharing the money which she may earn in prostitution or concubinage, but simply to commit fornication or adultery with her, is a great criminal.

As everybody knows, or ought to know, there are many thousands of people engaged every twenty-four hours in immorality. It is a fact. Convictions under the laws of those states are few. When they occur, the penalties imposed are almost always light. In the state of New York, where adultery is the only cause for the granting of a divorce—although a legal fiction brings about the same effect in certain cases of desertion—we might expect that every decree would be followed by the conviction of at least two persons. This is far from being the case.

What, then, has the Mann Act accomplished? It has made the crossing of the imaginary line which separates one state from another the gravamen of a very serious offense. Puritanical morality has gained nothing by it. Only the blackmailers and certain vicious people who desire to revenge themselves upon their enemies have benefited by it. If it were actually and exclusively directed against slavery, it would be difficult to find any reason for condemning the law. There may be advantages

in a system of involuntary servitude, but there is no good reason for applying it only to the brothel. But the man who is convicted under the Mann Act, as matters stand today, must be considered simply as being unfortunate.

Dr. Howard B. Woolston has written a work on *Prostitution in the United States* in two volumes, of which only the first one is available as I write. This was published by the Century Company in 1921, under the auspices of the Bureau of Social Hygiene. The organization presumably approves what Woolston has to say about the Diggs-Caminetti decision: "This reasonable interpretation of the White Slave Act to cover the cases of immorality where the parties involved crossed state lines has been popularly regretted and criticized in some quarters, but by the majority of right-thinking citizens it has been applauded as a means of lessening the traffic in women under any excuse."

The last word gives away the pretense of morality. The New Puritans are glad of any excuse, of any pretext, to twist the laws in favor of their own diseased ideas. They display a casuistry more complicated than any ever devised. They are encouraging banditry and murder and blackmail. The disrespect for the laws of which they complain is something for which they are themselves primarily responsible. A "right-thinking" citizen is apparently one who lacks the courage or the ability to do any thinking at all.

The usual case in which a man pays a woman's way into another state has nothing

to do with prostitution. The New Yorker who wants to have relations in Jersey City or Providence or Chicago is not compelled to take a courtesan from his own city with him. He can find harlots almost anywhere that he goes. They accost him on the coastwise steamers, on the railroad trains, in the streets. If he buys a ticket for a woman who is not his wife, it is because she has an individual value for him, perhaps amounting to love. Concubinage is not always easily to be told apart from common-law marriage, which is recognized in many of our states. Certainly it is unfortunate that the Mann Act has been used—indirectly as well as directly—to make men of considerable ability and accomplishment unhappy for what normal people must consider a very venial sin or no sin at all.

The Mann Act has done little or nothing to reduce the amount of prostitution in the United States. Some of the committees organized in the various cities have, however, succeeded in reducing the commercial aspects of illicit relationships. The New York Committee of Fifteen and its successor, the Committee of Fourteen, are worthy of special mention in this connection. Both these organizations were opposed to the Continental methods of regulating prostitution. It was argued that the systems of sanitary control are imperfect. Even if a woman is properly examined every week or two and found to be healthy, she has ample opportunity in the meanwhile to contract the disease of syphilis or of gonorrhoea and to spread it to others. Moreover, the latent state of syphilis

may last for two or three years; and it is impossible to keep every prostitute who is venereally diseased in a hospital or an asylum for so long a period. Besides, it is impracticable to examine all the male patrons who wish to enter a brothel. But the physicians who are in favor of regulation do not claim that a system of control is capable of putting an end to the venereal diseases in a few months. They say simply that it makes for better hygienic conditions. Syphilis and gonorrhoea are spread not simply through prostitution. They can be acquired in a variety of ways which have nothing to do with erotic relations.

The Social Evil, edited by Professor Edwin R. A. Seligman of Columbia, presents the views and the achievements of the two New York committees. Here we read that "all parties will agree" to certain preliminary conclusions: public solicitation should be eliminated, there ought to be no connection between prostitution and the sale of intoxicants, adequate treatment should be provided for the venereal diseases, growing children should not be kept in brothels, and tenement house conditions in general should be improved.

The proposals are of varying value. The Prohibition laws have made it impossible to keep liquor out of the brothel. A house where one illegal traffic is carried on is likely to be used for others as well: one might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb. But is liquor in any sense the cause of prostitution? The man who is pleasure-bound may be interested in both vices, of course; and it is true that the

harlots themselves are usually fond of intoxicants. There is no invariable connection, though. As to the providing of adequate facilities for the treatment of the venereal disease, only a fanatic can object. It is no more wrong to cure syphilis than it is to provide care for the patient suffering from tuberculosis, cancer, diphtheria, or infantile paralysis. If one is a scourge of God, so are the others. If cancer can be cured by fasting and prayer, so, no doubt, can gonorrhoea. But physicians are pretty decent fellows as a class, and I should not care to turn their business over to the priests. Besides, it is barely possible that medicine can do some things which faith cannot. Medical understanding of the venereal diseases is far greater now than it was fifty or twenty years ago. The nostrums purchased in drug stores are probably as efficacious as prayer, but it is best for the person who thinks he may be venereally diseased to see his physician. Else he may be doing a great injury to himself and perhaps to persons who are dear to him.

The problem of the tenement house and the slum district, although it is certainly connected with prostitution, is so complex that it cannot adequately be considered here. The same thing may be said about the minimum wage, especially for women. The defenders of the capitalistic system have been induced to agree to many social concessions out of fear that pure socialism might otherwise come about. Bebel and other socialist leaders have vigorously opposed prostitution, most of them maintaining that it is a result of glaring economic

inequality. It appears that the Bolshevistic rule in Russia has put an end to open prostitution. This has been accomplished—and there is probably no other way of doing it—by increasing sexual freedom in general. Easy divorce diminishes both prostitution and concubinage. Greater opportunities for women also decrease the need of accepting pay for immorality.

The New York Committee of Fifteen and similar organizations elsewhere did creditable work in opening a number of hospitals to venereal sufferers. In trying to combat the dance-hall and other forms of amusement which they considered undesirable, they stimulated the playground movement. City parks were improved, band concerts were inaugurated, and increased attention was paid to public libraries because of their propaganda. As to the influence of the reformers on the photoplay, this may easily be exaggerated. The building of many theaters, some of them containing several thousands of seats, has made it necessary for the producers to please family groups, some of them with puritanic ideas. Exhibitors in the small towns still complain that there is too much kissing in the photoplays, and that the knees of the actresses are sometimes made manifest. However, the American films are rather of a sickly sentimentality and of appeal to children under the age of twelve than in any sense indecent.

The Committee of Fifteen recommended in 1902 that the laws against prostitution should be repealed. The members saw clearly that

they served only to enrich the politicians and the police officials. They were opposed to a segregated district, though, and they were unwilling that the harlots should take up their quarters in crowded tenements. They thought that a special body of morals police should be established to deal with courtesans.

While New York was still "wide open," extremely high fees were paid by the brothel-keepers. Seligman's book tells us of a fifty-cent house containing not more than ten prostitutes for which an initiation charge of \$500 was made, with \$600 more to be paid annually thereafter in monthly installments. The alderman of the district, the policeman on the beat, the roundsman, the sergeant, and various higher police officers all got their share. In return, the brothel-keeper received the privilege of advertising openly. There were men stationed in the street to pull in customers, "and children of the neighborhood were given pennies to distribute the cards of the prostitutes." Investigators found over three hundred apartments occupied by harlots in Manhattan at the beginning of the twentieth century, and their work was incomplete. Sanger's statistical investigation was, in fact, the last one made in New York which could pretend to anything approaching accuracy.

In 1910, when the white slave agitation was at its height, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was the foreman of a special grand jury charged with investigating the traffic in New York County. No international syndicate was discoverable, but there were restaurants and clubrooms

where persons financially interested in the management and the supplying of brothels met. Aside from the regular houses of prostitution, the Raines Law hotels, as well as massage and manicure parlors, were found to be serving the courtesans. The licensing of massagists in some American cities and states has perhaps decreased their tendency to take part in prostitution.

In 1905, there were over 1200 Raines Law hotels in the New York boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx. Practically all of them were violating the law in more than one way. First of all, they did not maintain genuine restaurants. The Raines Law sandwich often was carefully covered with tissue paper, and a rubber band was placed around it to indicate that it was not meant to be eaten. Upton Sinclair, in the days that he was maintaining himself by hack writing, wrote a perfectly good one-dollar joke about the saloon-keeper who complained that his Sunday's business had been ruined by the careless person who had actually consumed the sandwich laid before him. Most of the "hotels" were old wooden shacks, and the violations of city ordinances were many. Pressure was laid by the reformers upon the brewers who outfitted such places and upon the bonding companies that guaranteed their good conduct. As a result, the number of Raines Law hotels in Manhattan and the Bronx decreased to 87 in 1911. In the last years of the saloon, it had comparatively little to do with prostitution. The connection had in a measure been forced

upon the liquor-dealers; and they did not particularly object to the loss of their hotel licenses, since it was arranged that they should be allowed to keep open on Sunday. Sometimes only the side entrances—those dedicated to families—were kept unlocked, and unknown customers were not encouraged. The patrolmen came in to investigate as a matter of course, and when they came out, wiping their lips, they were perfectly sure that the law-abiding proprietors kept their saloons closed on Sunday. The New Puritans were outraged by such flagrant lawbreaking, and they finally made it possible for the patrolman to get a drink or two every day of the week, and new shoes for his baby besides. Well, walking the beat is undoubtedly thirsty work.

The successful attack upon the Raines Law hotels did not appreciably diminish prostitution in New York. It sent some women into the brothels and others into furnished rooms in tenement houses. The courtesans flocked back to Broadway and to various other streets where men walked in large numbers. Outside the brothels, boys of fifteen or sixteen stood and helped the passers-by make up their mind. These "lighthouses," as they were called, were watchmen, too. Some politician who had not received what he considered his fair share of the blackmail money or who had a morbid desire to please the puritanical reformers might cause a raid to be made, and in that case it was advisable that the women should be warned beforehand. But the chief task of the "lighthouses" and of some older men sta-

tioned in the street was the pulling in of patrons.

The "lighthouse" who proved himself capable became a "cadet." The "cadets" were young men, usually between 18 and 25 years old, charged with the work of finding girls who could be induced to enter the brothels. The sensational books tell us that they usually promised marriage or that they otherwise engaged in trickery. They were recruiting officers, and we can be certain that they never emphasized the unpleasant aspects of the profession. It is probable, though, that their most inviting field was among young women who were semi-professional or professional prostitutes outside the brothels. The great majority of them knew what they were doing when they entered the houses. They were not brought in under the influence of drugs or believing that they were simply moving to new lodgings. When prostitution was least disturbed by the police, such tactics were dangerous. I do not say that they were never used, but simply that they were not typical. The reformers who believe that "any excuse" will do have not hesitated to present isolated instances of such outrages as though they indicated the usual state of affairs in the old days.

In 1906, the social hygiene movement became strong in the United States. What this has been and still is does not appear very clearly from the name. In the case of all infectious diseases, and to a considerable extent with regard to all maladies, hygiene must in part be social. The American Social Hygiene

Association, with headquarters in New York, and the various local organizations with similar titles are really Anti-Prostitution Leagues. Their point of view is moral rather than sanitary, and they are opposed to all forms of legal recognition and authorized control.

In 1910, the legislature of the state of New York passed the Page Law, which provided that women convicted of vagrancy should be examined by physicians of their own sex, and that if they were suffering from venereal diseases they should be imprisoned and given treatment until they were cured. This Erehonian act was later declared unconstitutional. The legislature had no right to punish prostitutes for their illness, even though the object of the imprisonment was their cure.

In 1911, according to Professor Seligman, there were in the United States 32 cities which regulated prostitution in one way or another. The control was closest in Atlantic City and in Cheyenne, where there were segregated districts and compulsory medical examinations for courtesans. The "red light district," without sanitary control, flourished in a number of important places.

The Bureau of Social Hygiene directed a study of conditions in New York in 1912, the results of which are summarized in George J. Kneeland's *Commercialized Prostitution in New York*. At this time, the city was still "wide open." We are told, indeed, that there were companies formed to operate brothels, and that the shares were offered for sale in special exchanges. For Sanger, as we have

seen, a "parlor house" was a brothel of the first class. More recently, it has meant any house devoted exclusively or almost entirely to prostitution. The fee ranged in 1912 from fifty cents to five or ten dollars. In the cheaper brothels, there was little cleanliness and no luxury. A few of the houses were regularly visited by physicians, but their examinations were usually hasty. At least one case is known where the doctor issued a certificate of perfect health while he was treating the woman concerned for a serious case of syphilis.

The brothel physicians, together with other persons interested in the "parlor houses," belonged for the most part to an organization called the Independent Benevolent Association. This was the closest approach to the great syndicate or trust about which sensational journalists, ever anxious to raise public morality and increase the circulation of their papers, were writing.

A few of the houses were open only to selected lists of patrons, but most of them welcomed every visitor who had the required price. Chauffeurs and cabmen were paid for the patrons they brought, and there were also special agents or runners. Some of the more pretentious brothels were said to be under the protection of influential politicians.

In recent years, the number of brothels in New York appears to have decreased. Street solicitation is comparatively rare. For the poor man, it seems that the facilities are much

less than they were before the war. As in the case of liquor, the man who can afford to spend a large amount is pretty well taken care of.

During 1917, Dr. Woolston carried on an investigation in forty American cities, not including New York. He sent ahead "an experienced field scout" in every case. Among the forty, he found ten where the police admitted that they were tolerating segregated districts. In seven of these ten, the police kept a register of courtesans. Especially in the larger cities, though, there were many un-enrolled harlots.

One of the places visited was Douglas, Arizona. The health authorities there issued in January, 1917, a list of regulations governing women of the restricted district. An examination, including a Wassermann test, was required of every prostitute as she entered the segregated zone and every three months thereafter. Licenses were issued to those women whose tests showed a negative reaction or whose physicians certified that, although they were diseased, they were non-infective. A charge was made for the certificates and the examinations.

"Publicly recognized markets of vice have been largely done away with," Dr. Woolston declares. "Their place, it is true, has partially been taken by new centers of activity, but these latter are furtive and surreptitious. Their blatant air is gone, and business is not what it used to be. Like any other commer-

cial enterprise, prostitution thrives through publicity and dwindles when it becomes difficult and dangerous."

As a matter of fact, there are still many American cities where the courtesans parade the streets as openly and in as great numbers as ever. Women are sometimes arrested and sent to reformatories, but the mass of the traffic continues. A new turn was given to the prostitution laws in several states during the Great War, when it was provided that the men found in brothels might be punished.

